

World COVID cases rocket by a fifth

December 24 2021



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The number of COVID-19 cases shot up by almost a fifth across the world this week, as the pandemic picked up speed in most regions, with Europe bearing the brunt.

Here is the global state of play based on an AFP database:

18 percent rise

The average number of new daily coronavirus cases over the past week increased by 18 percent to more than 749,000, according to an AFP tally to Thursday.

It was the tenth consecutive weekly rise.

The highest percentage flare ups took place in Oceania, where the number of cases more than doubled, and the United States/Canada zone, where they increased by 55 percent.

The pandemic slowed in Asia and in the Middle East, where cases dropped by 13 and 12 percent respectively.

The confirmed cases only reflect a fraction of the actual number of infections, with varying counting practices and levels of testing in different countries.

Main spikes

Several countries in Africa, where the highly contagious Omicron variant was first detected, were among those which registered the biggest spikes over the past week.

In Ethiopia the number of cases rocketed seven fold, while in Kenya there was a 483 percent increase, and cases rose by 370 percent in Zambia, 155 percent in Mozambique and 142 percent in Botswana.

Biggest drops

In Zimbabwe new cases halved followed by Belgium with a 47 percent

drop and Austria and Hungary down 36 percent each.

US still has most cases...

The US remained by far the country with the biggest number of new cases with 184,834 per day on average, an increase of 51 percent.

Next in line came the United Kingdom with 96,010 cases, an increase of 54 percent and France with 61,274 cases, an increase of 21 percent.

In regional terms, Europe is currently recording the most cases, with more than three million over the past week, accounting for 58 percent of the world total.

On a per capita basis, Denmark remains the country with the biggest number of new cases with 1,472 per 100,000 inhabitants, followed by the UK (990).

...And most deaths

The US also mourned the highest number of daily deaths with 1,498, followed by Russia with 1,035.

In regional terms Europe had the most deaths, with 26,375 over the week, or 54 percent of the world total.

At a global level the [number](#) of deaths decreased by two percent to 6,939 a day.

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